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Challenge!

Stansfield Turner

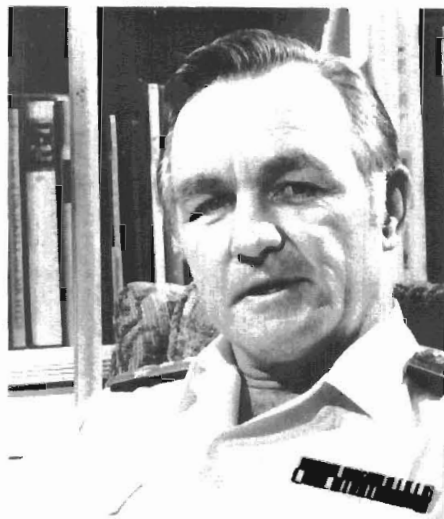
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CHALLENGE!

In this issue the *Naval War College Review* commemorates the first anniversary of the return of our prisoners of war from North Vietnam. All of us in the military are honored to know these men, servicemen who have been asked to give more than any of us living today. I recommend, though, that we all take a cue from one of Rear Adm. Jim Stockdale's remarks in the lead article in this issue. The time has come to stop regarding these men as ex-POW's. Their interests and ours will be served best by welcoming them back to the ranks and not dwelling on the past.

The year that has passed since their release has seen great changes in the orientation of public attention. ROTC is again respected and unmolested on college campuses. Past fixations on Vietnam and the resultant antimilitary domestic turmoil have abated. The "public" has proven to have a short attention span and is now concerned with oil, the realities of détente, and the realization that last October our military forces might have been tried and found wanting. Our ex-POW's never knew the realities of our national unrest over Vietnam. They were fed only selected propagandistic morsels on

which to chew. When they returned, it was history. They were exploited by their captors for years; for us to further exploit their return as the only heroes of an unpopular war would be both untimely and insensitive.

We all lost in Vietnam; these men lost much more than most. It was for them a bitter but beneficial experience. Their courage in adhering to the finest in traditional military discipline should be an example to all of us as we face the challenge of the next decade. Those with whom I have talked do not feel that they need more recuperation. They wish to join with the rest of our military in facing tomorrow's challenge. Let us honor them by respecting their desires.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Stansfield Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "S" and "T".

STANSFIELD TURNER
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy
President, Naval War College